



Quarterly Report

Australian College Of Road Safety

April 2002

From the President

ROAD SAFETY EXPERIENCES FROM 2001, AND THE NEED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS.

Now that the road safety statistics are reasonably settled, we are able to examine the outcomes for Australia for 2001. Because of the gravity of the outcome and the greater accuracy of reporting, fatalities are the statistical benchmark.

While consideration of data such as these inevitably raises comparisons of the various states and territories, we must remain conscious of the limitations of such comparisons. Direct comparisons of the different jurisdictions are confounded by differences in population size and make-up, vehicle fleet, road types and distances, and road transport uses. While we can substantially control these factors by comparing the states in terms of changes in fatalities from year to year, the interpretation of these changes is not straightforward. First, economic changes may confound changes in road trauma from year to year. Second, there is a strong tendency to treat the previous year as a simple baseline. This can be a critical error. Countermeasures in place in the previous year may have been substantially influential. Thus, assessment of countermeasures in a given year by comparison with preceding years really amounts to comparison of the efficacy of the different countermeasures across the different years.

With all of these caveats in mind, 2001 was an improved year in road safety terms in Australia. The average annual number of fatalities for the three years prior to 2001 (1998-2000) was 1,781 (The RTA of NSW is acknowledged for supplying the data cited here) and in 2000 the total was 1820, compared with 1,756 in 2001. The largest

reductions occurred in NSW (579 average for 1998-2000, compared with 537 for 2001) and Western Australia (218 average for 1998-2000, compared with 164 for 2001). Hopefully, there are lessons to be learnt from these reductions and how they were achieved. However, such lessons are not simply distilled.

NSW achieved its lowest road toll since 1949. However, there were many potential contributors to that reduction, many of which were introduced by the NSW Road Safety Task Force, itself introduced after the road toll of 603 in 2000. (Even without the reduced road toll, as a member of the Road Safety Task Force I could already see potentially good news for road safety: political resolve to address the problem, with the introduction of controversial measures which did not raise revenue, such as demerit points for drivers when their adult passengers are not restrained). The most likely causes of the success appear to be: the extensions of the holiday double demerit points system and the extensive media coverage and campaigning which accompanied these changes, changed style of advertising (from general road safety concerns to identifying and socially rewarding desired behaviours such as catching a taxi after drinking) increased penalties for non-use of seatbelts, 50kph urban speed limit rollout, enhanced enforcement, blackspot treatment, Westsafe (a program aimed specifically at Western Sydney), and possibly the graduated licensing program. It is to be hoped that more detailed analysis of the crash data will be undertaken to allow better assessment of the impact of these various countermeasures. Such analysis is clearly informative. We can expect reductions in crash involvement of different road user groups, or at different locations, or at different times of the year or times of the day to reveal the separate impacts of the measures undertaken. For example, the effects of the new style anti-drink-driving ads

could be assessed by looking for changes in drink-driving related crashes, or at drink-driving times, relative to other crashes after the ads screened; Effective blackspot treatment would be revealed by crash reductions at treated sites compared with untreated sites; success of the Graduated Licensing System would be identified by reduced crash involvement of the relevant age group compared with the involvement of that age group in earlier years. Despite the general improvement in NSW, there were two road user groups for whom fatalities rose: motorcyclists and pedal cyclists. While the small numbers involved may make these increases statistically unreliable, assessment of these results may also be valuable for future measures.

Follow-up analyses of the type suggested above are critical to informing our understanding of the factors and countermeasures which influence the road toll. No doubt each jurisdiction is in a similar position of having made several changes and needing detailed analysis to identify likely successes and failures. As a College we should call on each of our relevant state/territory bodies to pursue these analyses, at the level of crashes, not simply surveys of approval and liking of campaigns. We should also expect that the results will be shared, for all to employ for adjustment and improvement.

Soames Job, President.

News from the College Chapters

ACT and Region Chapter

The Chapter will be holding its AGM on 22 April. The Chapter Executive is seeking more opportunities for media exposure.

NSW (New England) Chapter

The Chapter is planning to run its 'Arrive Alive' Expo again in June. The AGM is planned for 16 April with the local road safety officer speaking.

NSW (Sydney) Chapter

The Chapter has surveyed members' concerns and is now considering the program for the rest of the year. Subjects suggested include the emergency rescue and medical services and the evaluation of the cost of crashes.

Queensland Chapter

The Chapter held its AGM on 5 March. The Chapter is taking a major role in helping to

organise the July 'Developing Safer Drivers and Riders Conference'.

South Australia Chapter

The Chapter will be holding its AGM on 8 May and is planning to invite a speaker.

Victorian Chapter

The Chapter is planning a Fleet Safety Seminar for May and a joint conference on 'Older Road Users' with the Victorian Parliament Road Safety Committee in August.

Western Australian Chapter

The Chapter is planning to hold its AGM on 23 April, combined with a seminar on Schoolzones. A regional youth workshop is also planned.

National Conference on 'Developing Safer Drivers and Riders'

Plans for our joint conference with the Travelsafe Committee of the Queensland Parliament are proceeding well. The registration brochure will be sent to all members by the end of April. Over 30 abstracts have been submitted. The conference has attracted substantial sponsorship. Keynote speakers will be Dan Mayhew (Canada) and Dr Ron Christie. We are expecting to achieve a registration fee of \$231 for College members.

Road Safety Expertise Gains Growing Recognition in NSW

The 'Local Government Road Safety News' for March 2002 reports that there are now 67 Road Safety Officers working in 93 councils right across NSW. Only ten years ago the first Council Road Safety Officer, Jacquie Anderson, began the first council road safety program. The Road Safety Officers are supported in their work by the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP). This program provides a framework of assistance for the officers and all NSW councils to raise the priority for road safety in their communities.

The foundational philosophy of the LGRSP is that to be effective, public education on road safety needs to be personally relevant. Initially operating through 'one off' community awareness raising projects, today the mission of the LGRSP is to facilitate strategic ongoing programs generating measured and sustainable change.

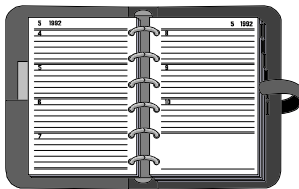
The growth in importance of the LGRSP has encouraged the professional development of the

road safety officers. Last year a nationally recognised competency-based training program was made available – the Certificate IV in Road Safety. Details about the Certificate can be obtained from the IPWEA Road Safety Project Officer, Urszula Wynd, tel: 02 8267 3008.

Exciting New Hands-On Exhibition

The NRMA and Questacon (the hands-on National Science and Technology Center in Canberra) have cooperated to establish a \$2.1 million interactive road safety exhibition called 'RoadZone'. The exhibition and program aims to foster safe road use behaviours in 9-15 year olds, delivering its message through engaging and exciting interactive exhibits and an entertaining science show. Launched on 12 February 2002, NRMA RoadZone provides opportunities to conduct crash dummy tests, design a bike helmet, test ability at spotting risks, ride a skate board simulator, guess the real speed of cars, cross a busy road safely, play Street Quiz and Wheel of Misfortune and discover the impact of peer pressure. Take your kids to RoadZone if you possibly can – they'll have a lot of fun (and so will you!) and learn much about road safety at the same time. RoadZone was at Questacon until 5 April, and then went on tour in NSW, with plans to visit Orange in term 2, Newcastle in term 3 and Port MacQuarrie in term 4.

For your Diary



1 – 5 May 2002: Australian Trucking Convention, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart, Tasmania. Contact: Tel: 02-6247 5832; email: ata@truck.net.au.

24 May 2002: MAA Pedestrian Seminar, Sydney. Contact: 02 4984 2554 or email: jane@pco.com.au

16-17 July 2002: 'Saferoads-turning plans into action' at the Grand Hyatt, Melbourne. For information: www.saferoads2002.com

21-23 July 2002: 'Developing Safer Drivers' and Riders' Conference, Brisbane, organised

jointly by the Australian College of Road Safety and the Travelsafe Committee of the Queensland Parliament. For information: eo@acrs.org.au

7-9 August 2002: Local Government Road Safety Conference, Newcastle. For information call 02-8267 3012; website: www.pco.com.au/lgrsc2002

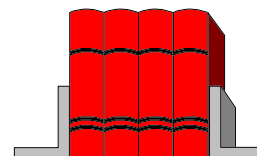
8-9 August 2002: AITPM National Conference – 'Travelator' – Traffic and Transport on the Move. For information visit the web site: <http://www.aitpm.org.au/conference/> or contact Dan Sullivan on Tel: 08 9323 4162

August 2002 (dates not yet decided): **'Older Road Users' joint conference** with the Australian College of Road Safety and the Victorian Parliament Road Safety Committee. Contact: Greg Rowe: tel: 03 9854 2655 or email: Greg.Rowe@roads.vic.gov.au

2-4 October 2002: The 25th Australasian Transport Research Forum, Canberra, hosted by the Bureau of Transport Economics.

3-5 November: 2002 Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference, Adelaide Convention Centre. For information contact Plevin and Associates tel: 08 8379 8222; email: events@plevin.com.au

New to the ACRS Library



The following publications have been received recently in the National Office Library. If members would like more information about them, please contact the National Office.

1. **'Age and Sex Profiles of Speeding and Drink Driving Offenders and Drivers Involved in Casualty Crashes'**, Transport SA, January 2001.
2. **'Improved Side Impact Protection: a review of injury patterns, injury tolerance and dummy measurement**

capabilities', Monash University Accident Research Centre, August 2001

30 kph school zones trialled

18 Queensland schools are trialling all day 30 kph school zones, following the lead of Scandinavian countries, which have the lowest child fatality and injury rates in the world after introducing 25 kph speed limits around schools in the early 1980s. Research has shown that children under 10 years of age do not have the necessary perceptual skills to act safely in traffic. The responsibility must therefore be placed on drivers and riders to slow down in the intensely concentrated school environment to reduce the likelihood of crashes occurring.

Safety Triangle for Children

Two Victorian grandmothers have teamed up to launch a company to market a safety triangle for children to wear when walking to and from school. The 'Gul Safety Triangle' is worn like a necklace. Made in Switzerland from yellow fluorescent PVC woven washable fabric, with radiance reflective silver trim, the triangle is designed to greatly increase the child's visibility to drivers. For more information see www.gul.com.au.

College Fellow looks at school transport safety

Year 2000 ACRS Fellow, Professor Mary Sheehan, who is Director of the Centre for Accident and Road Safety Research at Queensland University of Technology, recently served on the Queensland School Transport Safety Task Force. Professor Sheehan reported that walking trains modeling safe pedestrian behaviour, school policy restricting peer passengers for young drivers, and innovative engineering measures to separate buses from other school traffic were just some of the initiatives that impressed the Task Force. "There have been no fatalities or injuries on a supervised school crossing since the School Crossing Supervisor Scheme was introduced in 1984, another achievement of which Queensland should be proud," she said.

The Task Force reported that it was "saddened that the highly controversial issue of seatbelts on school buses had resulted in many parents refusing to allow their children to use this extremely safe form of transport."

Triple Seat Belts for School Buses

A Melbourne-based company, McConnell Seats has designed a bus seat and belt combination that can provide seat belts for two adults or three small children. The seat was developed in response to approaches by three state governments, following lobbying by parents and the Australian Medical Association to get seat belts fitted in school buses. The governments would like to introduce seatbelt protection for children, but because of financial restraints, want to do so without adding to school bus fleet numbers and costs. The new seats would, nevertheless, mean an additional cost of between \$12,000 and \$15,000 per vehicle. Meanwhile, continued efforts are being made by governments to seek ways to improve safety in the area where the great majority of school bus accidents occur - the external environment of the school bus when it stops for passengers to get on or off.

Irresponsible Car Advertising Becoming a Major Issue

The National Executive Committee of the College is preparing a letter to the Federal Government about its concerns regarding the recent spate of car manufacturers' advertisements on TV that display examples of reckless and dangerous driving and speeding. At present the advertising industry is self-regulating in this regard and so far appears to be ignoring the pleas of motoring organisations and groups such as 'Australian Parents Against Road Trauma' to be more responsible in the kind of advertisements it shows. Increasing pressure is being put on the Government to introduce legislation of the kind existing in other countries that makes such advertising illegal. One encouraging sign is that Senator Ron Boswell, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, has called for a specific advertising code for vehicle advertising similar to Britain and New Zealand.

Graduate Studies in Road Safety

The Queensland University of Technology, through its Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety (CARRS-Q) is offering graduate certificate and graduate diploma courses in road safety. As with the Certificate IV for road safety officers, referred to earlier in this Quarterly Report, the provision of certificate courses in road safety at post graduate level is further indication of the growing professionalism of road safety in Australia. This can only be a good thing, as it will

lead to greater objectivity and a more scientific approach to reducing the road toll.

The courses offered by CARRS-Q are relevant to:

- People working in the field of road safety;
- Managers responsible for road safety improvements;
- Practitioners from related traffic, transport or injury reduction fields;
- People wanting to move into the road safety field.

To enroll in the Graduate Certificate course a candidate will need to:

- Hold a degree from a university; or
- Hold a qualification, professional standing or established work/professional practice relevant to road safety.

To enroll in the Graduate Diploma course a candidate will need to:

- Hold a degree from a university, or
- Have completed a Graduate Certificate in Road Safety or another qualification relevant to road safety.

To receive an information kit and application form for these courses, contact the Administration Officer, CARRS-Q on tel: 07 3864 4568 or email: carrs-q@qut.edu.au

Driver Education in Remote Areas

Supported with funding from the Territory Insurance Office, the Northern Territory University established a Remote Areas Driver Training and Education Program in 1998 to address driver training needs of people in rural and remote communities. At that time, Aboriginal people accounted for 27% of the Northern Territory population and 54% of the road fatalities. Education was seen as one way of addressing this alarmingly high proportion.

The purpose of the program was to increase participation of people living in these areas in formal driver training programs and to provide communities with the means and strategies to assist them to achieve these goals. To make driver training in communities viable and sustainable, a strategy was developed to train community based driving instructors and provide them with relevant and culturally appropriate resources. This would empower the communities to take ownership of their driver training and road safety issues.

Now in its fourth year, the program not only delivers driver instructor training but also facilitates delivery in all areas of driver training in remote areas of the NT. The program has in fact given communities the chance to take ownership of driver training and education. It has also provided employment opportunities for both instructors and students gaining their licence as well as creating another source of income for communities through Driver Training and Licensing and government funding of courses.

For further information contact Eve Somssich, Manager/Lecturer, Driver Education and Training Unit, NT University on tel: 08 8946 6253.

New Zealand Government seeks further gains in road safety

Although the 2001 road toll in New Zealand was the lowest on record (453 deaths), the NZ Government recently announced land transport expenditure intended to achieve further improvements in road safety. The final shape of the Road Safety Strategy to 2010 is still being finalised, but it is believed that a road toll of less than 300 would be a realistic target. Some of the key interventions will be funded by an additional \$34 million for road safety education and enforcement until June 2003. Further educational spending is anticipated in primary schools, novice driver education and community and public advertising. David Wright, Director of Land Transport Safety, believes that "Education is the key to changing perceptions and attitudes towards road safety." He said, "While our advertising campaigns target existing drivers, we need to look well into the future at ways to create a nation of adults and new drivers who have an ingrained respect for the road and everything around it."

Rear seat safety belt use down in NZ

In spite of straight gains over the four years to 2000, rear seat safety belt wearing rates were down last year, according to the latest LT SA survey. The use of rear seat belts by adults dropped from 76% in 2000 to 70% in 2001. This compares with front seat safety belt use running at 92% in 2001. There was better news from another survey, looking at the use of child restraints. This had shown that the use of child seats, infant seats, booster seats and child

harnesses by children under five was up to 82%, compared with 79% in 2000 and 74% in 1997.

Over the last 10 years, more than 500 unrestrained vehicle passengers have been killed in crashes on New Zealand roads. Crash reports show that at least 209 of these people could have been saved if they had been wearing a safety belt at the time of the crash.

EU ignores expert advice on safer car fronts for pedestrians

The European Parliament seems likely to pass legislation on safer car fronts that falls far short of earlier proposals and amounts to "a complete cave-in to the intensive lobby of the car industry". (ETSC Safety Monitor No.39, December 2001). Against the advice of safety experts from across Europe, the Internal Market Council gave the green light to the European Commission on 26 November to go ahead with the draft voluntary agreement on safer car fronts, subject to the following conditions:

- prohibition of bull bars must be extended to all new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes.
- deferring the introduction of daytime running lights until definition of the technical procedures
- involvement of Member States in the implementation of the agreement
- use of the pedestrian protection measures contained in the agreement as a technical basis for developing a global technical regulation in the framework of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Responding to the decision, Jeanne Breen, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council said, "By introducing legislation which reflects our best knowledge we have an opportunity here to save as many as 2,000 lives and 18,000 serious injuries annually at an additional cost at design stage of only 30 euro per car. Making the ordinary fronts of cars safe for vulnerable road users is, undoubtedly, the most important transport safety matter on the EU agenda. The Minister's decision gives a clear signal that, contrary to what it would have us believe, the EU is not working either for the individual citizen or in the interests of public safety."

The ETSC points out that if the legislation is passed, 75% fewer lives will be saved, compared with the tests developed over a 22 year program. Also, the legislation will fail to implement best practice – a car on the road now – the Japanese Honda Civic – offers three times the amount of protection that the European automotive industry is offering to implement fully by 2012!

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